

RENWICK QUARTERLY

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Published for the Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, by the James Renwick Alliance.

James Renwick Fellowship Program to Add Curatorial Fellows

Buoyed by the nationwide interest which the James Renwick Fellowship Program has generated, and by the growing public recognition of the Renwick Gallery's commitment to contemporary American craft, the Renwick Alliance is expanding the Fellowship Program's scope and appealing for additional support. In addition to funding Research Fellows engaged in scholarly study of the modern craft movement, the Alliance will begin providing support for Curatorial Fellows as well. These new Fellows will spend a period of several months at the Renwick Gallery each year, broadening their knowledge and experience in the field of contemporary craft, and helping to expand the Renwick's exhibition program.

Few American museums have developed the interest or expertise in craft which would enable them to pursue a serious exhibition or acquisition program in the field. Although the number of "fine art" museums which show or collect contemporary studio craft is increasing, the area is still sorely neglected. As the Smithsonian Institution's museum for 20th Century American craft,

the Renwick Gallery should provide leadership in expanding the place of contemporary craft in the programs of the nation's museums.

The Alliance's new Curatorial Fellowship will help the Renwick fulfill this role. Each year, a Curatorial Fellow, selected from among museum professionals and others with appropriate curatorial background, will be invited to Washington to work under the guidance of the Renwick Gallery's Curator-in-Charge. Their principal activity will be to develop proposals for major exhibitions of craft art, by conducting the research necessary to document and support their rationale. In addition to broadening their own knowledge of the field, the Fellowship will enable them to lay the groundwork for exhibitions which lie outside the priorities of their home museums, or which the pressures of their

professional duties have left them no time to pursue.

The result will be an expanded and enhanced program of exhibitions of contemporary craft for the nation. The work of the Fellows will enlarge the Renwick Gallery's capacity to originate and circulate well-documented exhibitions, whose visual and scholarly content will make them especially attractive to other museums throughout the United States. In addition, the Fellowship



Michael Moore, Curator-in-Charge of the Renwick Gallery, presented several works on October 20, to the Acquisitions Committee of the James Renwick Alliance, for consideration as Alliance purchases for the permanent collection.

program will enable the Renwick to build a network of curators around the country with a greater interest in and knowledge of contemporary craft and with continuing informal ties to the Renwick and its staff.

The Alliance has launched a campaign to raise \$10,000 by December 31, in order to begin the expanded Fellowship Program in 1989 with the appointment of the first James Renwick Curatorial Fellow. These funds are being sought outside the Alliance's regular budget, so as not to take away from the support the Alliance now gives to the Renwick Gallery to assist its acquisitions and public education programs.

The Renwick Gallery's parent museum, the National Museum of American Art, is strongly supporting the new Curatorial Fellowship and will share in its funding, as it is now doing for the original Research Fellowship. This partnership ensures the strength and continuity of the program as a whole, and we are immensely excited about its potential.

Applications for James Renwick Research Fellowships Due January 15

Proposals from candidates interested in Research Fellowships within the James Renwick Fellowship Program are due January 15, 1989, for appointments beginning on or after June 1, 1989. Applications are sought from scholars knowledgeable in the history of 20th Century American art, craft or design, particularly post-1930 craft developments. Research Fellows work within the Smithsonian museums and other local resource facilities for a period of three to twelve months, at stipends ranging from \$12,500 to \$20,000.

For more information on the James Renwick Fellowship Program, which is co-sponsored by the James Renwick Alliance, please contact the Office of Fellowships and Grants, Smithsonian Institution, Suite 7300 L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, DC 20560. Or call (202) 287-3271.



George Nakashima, woodworker and architectural designer, spoke in an informal setting on October 16, to one of the largest audiences ever assembled in the Grand Salon. In discussing his work with furniture, Mr. Nakashima noted the personal joy he finds in uncovering the unique beauty of each piece of wood.



NEWS from the Alliance

Roger Kuhn
President

As the year draws to a close, there is a natural temptation to look back and review the accomplishments of the past. There is far more excitement, however, in looking ahead — and that's what the Alliance has been doing.

At its October meeting, the Alliance Board approved a major expansion of the James Renwick Fellowship Program. This is the program initiated by the Alliance last year to provide Research Fellowships for scholarly study of the modern craft movement. Beginning in 1989, the program will offer support for both Research Fellows and Curatorial Fellows. The new Curatorial Fellows will be selected by the Renwick Gallery's Curator-in-Charge from among museum professionals and others with appropriate curatorial background. Each year, a Curatorial Fellow will spend several months in residence at the Renwick, conducting research leading to the development of a major craft exhibition, or relating to some aspect of the Renwick's growing permanent collection. The work of these Fellows will significantly enhance the Renwick's capacity to originate and circulate important exhibitions of craft art, while at the same time enlarging their own knowledge of the field. The result will be to expand the place of contemporary craft in the programs of the nation's museums.

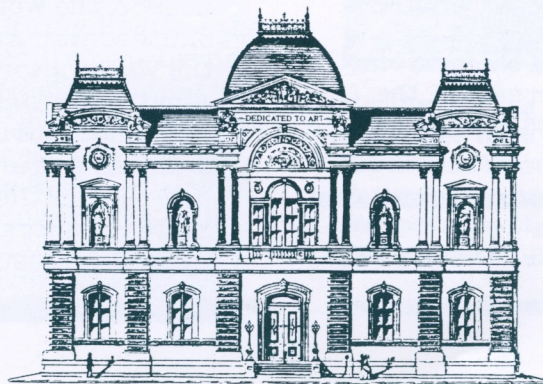
This new component of the James Renwick Fellowship Program has the enthusiastic support

of the Renwick Gallery's parent museum, the National Museum of American Art. The NMAA will share in the funding of the expanded program, ensuring its viability in the coming years.

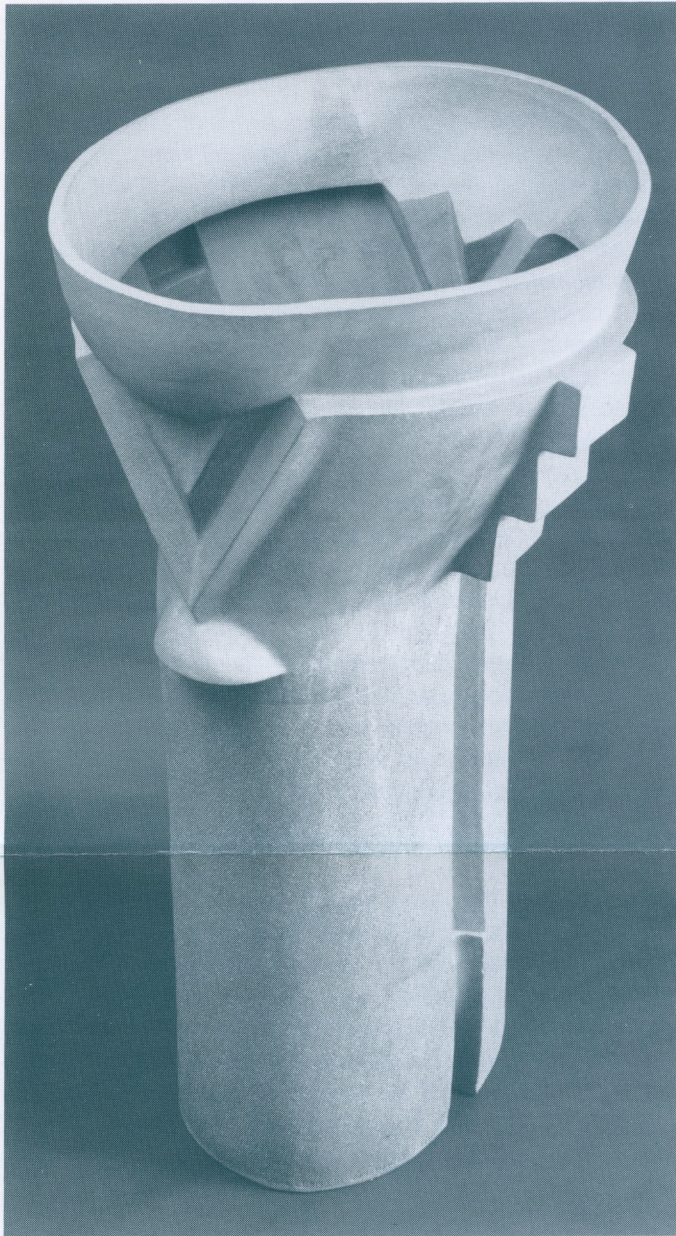
Also in October, the Alliance Acquisitions Committee — consisting of present and former Board members and Benefactor members of the Alliance — met to consider the purchase of more pieces proposed for addition to the Renwick's permanent collection by the Gallery's Curator-in-Charge Michael Monroe. For the first time, the meeting was held in the Grand Salon of the Renwick Gallery and the objects under consideration were on display in the Palm Court for viewing by the Committee. Among the objects to be acquired by the Renwick as a result of this meeting are an elegant draped glass bowl by Frances Higgins and a large laminated glass platter by her husband Michael. The Higgineses are among the half-dozen important studio artists working in glass in the 1930's, '40's and '50's, who were the forerunners of the contemporary studio glass movement. Further details about these and other pieces being purchased with Alliance funds will appear in the next issue of *The Renwick Quarterly*.

In 1989, the Alliance's annual Spring Forum will expand to become a two-part weekend event. The component being added is a gala Saturday evening, which will begin with a private viewing of the Washington Craft Show. This will be followed by dinner at a private home, where participants will be able to chat with the show's jurors and with the speakers who will appear at the second part of the weekend program on Sunday morning. The Sunday morning program will be modeled on previous Alliance Forums and will be followed by a tour and discussion of the newly opened Renwick Gallery exhibit, "The Boat Show: Fantastic Vessels, Fictional Voyages."

This promises to be an especially exciting program, and I hope many of our readers will be able to take advantage of it. The date: April 22-23, 1989.



Featured Object at Renwick



Oval Chamber, by William Daley, 1986, stoneware. A featured object on exhibit at the Renwick Gallery, this piece was purchased with funds provided by the James Renwick Alliance and museum funds. In this work Daley subtly suggests a life-size fragment of architecture, but the vessel is also a metaphor for the human figure. The flaired and enlarged rim becomes a repository for information, the surface mimics facial features, and the base acts as a firm torso.

Craft Weekend in Washington April 22-23, 1989

By Rebecca Stevens

The 1989 Spring Forum will be part of an exciting weekend filled with craft events. On Saturday, April 22, forum participants will visit the Washington Craft Show at their leisure. Early that evening, when the Craft Show closes to the public, they will be invited to remain for a private tour of the exhibit with Michael Monroe, Curator-in-Charge of the Renwick Gallery. Mr. Monroe, along with exhibition jurors and other noted craft specialists, will discuss the craft art on display and answer Forum guests' questions. The show tour will be followed by a series of private dinners in the homes of Washington craft collectors, where participants will meet Craft Show jurors as well as speakers from the Spring Forum.

Artists Jamie Bennett, Wayne Higby, Sherri Smith, Rosanne Somerson and curator Frederick Brandt will be guest speakers for the Forum, scheduled for Sunday. Each will discuss how material itself (metal, wood or clay) influences his or her art. Following these personal comments, the artists, joined by Michael Monroe and a well-known collector, will talk about the influence of materials on craft art in general.

The day will conclude with a guided walk through the newly opened Renwick exhibit "The Boat Show: Fantastic Vessels, Fictional Voyages," conducted by exhibition curator Jeremy Adamson.

Participants will be able to subscribe separately to either the Saturday evening or the Sunday portion of the program, or to the entire package. Details will follow in the next issue of the *Quarterly*.

1989 Washington Craft Show Extended to Four Days

In the first expansion since the show began in 1983, the Women's Committee of the Smithsonian Associates will add one day to the Washington Craft Show, scheduled for April 20-23, 1989. This annual show, the only major juried exhibition and sale of crafts as fine art in the nation's capital, benefits Smithsonian education and research projects. Further details will appear in the next issue of the *Quarterly*.

Recent Contributions to the James Renwick Alliance

The Alliance welcomes the gifts of the following contributing members, received between July 15 and October 15, 1988:

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In addition, the Alliance is most grateful for the following recent contributions to the James Renwick Fellowship Program:

Benefactors

Mr. and Mrs. Robert P. Kogod

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur K. Mason

Richmond Craft Study Tour

by Shelley Gollust

Forty-five Renwick Alliance members and guests took part in an unforgettable Craft Study Tour to Richmond, Virginia on September 30.

Arriving in Richmond at the magnificent neo-Georgian home of art collectors Sydney and Frances Lewis, the group was met by Frederick Brandt, the Lewises' former curator and now Curator of 20th Century Art at the Virginia Museum. Participants were free to wander through the extraordinary home and marvel at the spectacular contemporary art, artist-designed furniture and craft objects by the likes of Wendell Castle, Sam Maloof, Judy McKie and Jack Lenor Larsen.

Paul Smith, curator of the monumental exhibition which inaugurated the American Craft Museum in New York — "Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical" — spoke to the group on the bus trip from Washington to Richmond and guided participants through the exhibition in the Virginia Museum. The more than 300 pieces created by 286 artists illustrated the diversity and vitality of the American craft movement.

After lunch in the Members Dining Room of the Virginia Museum, the group toured the Lewis collections in the new West Wing, including the magnificent collection of Art Nouveau and other European and American decorative arts in the upstairs galleries, and the late 20th Century American painting and sculpture in the galleries below.



Members of the Renwick Alliance Acquisitions Committee were the first to see the larger-than-life dramatic forms of Stephen DeStaeble, shown above, in the exhibition "Stephen DeStaeble: The Figure," on view in the first floor galleries through February 12, 1989.

Renwick Gallery Public Programs December 88, January-February 89

- December 1:** Illustrated lecture: In the superbly appointed Grand Salon, furnished in the styles of the 1860's and 1870's, Allen Bassing — Public Programs Coordinator for the Renwick — will discuss social graces and apparel of Victorian America. At noon. Free.
- December 15:** Creative Screen: "*Festival of Claymation*" is a provocative collection of short animated films by Academy Award-winner Will Vinton, best known for his commercial of dancing and singing raisins. Claymation is a painstaking process in which clay-sculpted figures are changed 24 times for each second of finished film. Vinton uses this technique to amuse, tell stories and recount history. At 11:00 AM and 12:30 PM. Free.
- December 17:** Creative Screen: Repeat of December 15.
- January 12:** Creative Screen: In "*Sculpture Today*," the process of creating sculptural works is examined at various stages. (19 minutes). "*Sculpture: The Forms of Life*," discusses ways in which art expresses man's reaction to his time and his society. Ancient, as well as modern, sculptural masterpieces are shown. (22 minutes). these films are shown in conjunction with the exhibition "Stephen DeStaebler: The Figure." At 11:00 AM, noon and 1:00 PM. Free.
- January 18:** Illustrated lecture: On the occasion of the Renwick Gallery's 18th anniversary, Allen Bassing, Public Programs Coordinator for the Renwick, will give an illustrated talk on "Renwick, Corcoran and the Gallery" — a history of the museum building and the individuals important to its development. At noon. Free.
- January 19:** Creative Screen: Repeat of January 12.
- February 2:** Illustrated lecture: Glass artist Sidney Hutter of Cambridge, Massachusetts, will discuss his lighting designs in which glass, metal and rubber are combined into various types of functional lamps. This lecture is co-sponsored by The Glass Gallery. At 8:00 PM. Free.
- February 8:** Illustrated lecture: "American Craft and Folk Art of the 19th Century" will be the subject of an illustrated talk by Allen Bassing. In this survey, ornamental and useful objects from quilts to pottery to figureheads will be discussed. At noon. Free.
- February 9:** Creative Screen: "*A Voyage Through Early Cinema*." Early films borrowed ideas from vaudeville, newspaper stories, dime novels, and other forms of popular entertainment. They were also the foundation for modern cinema. Included are the "*The Great Train Robbery*" and "*A Trip to the Moon*." At 11 AM and 12:30 PM. Free.
- February 16:** Creative Screen: Repeat of February 9.

Inquiries about the James Renwick Alliance should be sent to:

James Renwick Alliance
6801 Winterberry Lane, Bethesda, MD 20817

The Alliance gratefully acknowledges partial grant support for programs and this issue of the Renwick Quarterly from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, DC, a Federal Agency, and the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.



Stag Attacked by Hounds, by William Hunt Diederich, ca. 1920. This fire screen of wrought iron with copper and brass, a recent acquisition, is a featured object at the Renwick Gallery. The screen, originally designed for

the studio of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, exemplifies the designer's vibrant style. Diederich took particular pleasure in portraying animals, finding "glorious rhythm and spontaneity" in their natural grace and raw energy.

To Join the Alliance

The James Renwick Alliance welcomes the support of all who share in its admiration for the creative vision of artists working today in the craft media. Members' contributions enable the Alliance to sponsor educational programs in contemporary crafts, to support the activities of the Smithsonian Institution's museum of 20th Century American craft, the Renwick Gallery, and to enlarge the national collection of American craft at the Renwick.

Membership in the Alliance, renewable annually, provides the following benefits:

- All members receive the Alliance's publication, *The Renwick Quarterly*.
- Donors (\$100+) receive *The Renwick Quarterly* plus — invitations to special receptions for artists, and exhibition tours conducted by artists or curators; a complimentary catalog of a major Renwick Gallery exhibition, and discounts on the Alliance's Spring Forum and all Craft Study Tours.
- Sponsors (\$250+) receive the above benefits plus — one complimentary ticket to the Spring Forum held each year to coincide with the Washington Craft Show; and the opportunity to attend training lectures and exhibition tours conducted for Renwick docents.

- Patrons (\$500+) receive the above benefits plus — an additional complimentary ticket to the Spring Forum; and two complimentary tickets to an Alliance Craft Study Tour.
- Benefactors (\$1,000+) receive the above benefits plus — membership in the Alliance's Acquisitions Committee, which allocates Alliance funds for the purchase of objects proposed for acquisition by the Curator of the Renwick Gallery.

To join the Alliance, please complete the form below and mail it with your check to the James Renwick Alliance, 6801 Winterberry Lane, Bethesda, MD 20817. Contributions are tax deductible.

-
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- Sponsor (\$250+) Benefactor (\$1,000+)
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